

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR/PN

SUBJECT: ARA REGIONAL NARCOTICS DETECTOR DOG SCHOOL
DEVELOPMENT

REF: PANAMA 5487

1. BASED UPON THE IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS RAISED IN REFTL,
U. S. CUSTOMS PROPOSES THAT THE MEETING TO DETERMINE A
COURSE OF ACTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL NARCOTICS
DETECTOR DOG TRAINING CENTER BE POSTPONED.

2. CUSTOMS IS OF THE OPINION THAT AS A FIRST STEP, A SURVEY
OF AREA COUNTRIES IS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE EXIST-
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ING DOG EXPERTISE AND FACILITIES AND COUNTRY COMMITMENT TO

THE OPERATIONAL USE OF DOG TRAINING ALREADY PROVIDED BY U. S. CUSTOMS. THE SURVEY TEAM WILL DETERMINE WHAT VOLUME OF TRAINING COULD BE EXPECTED AT A REGIONAL CENTER AND WHAT COUNTRY WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE AS A LOCATION FOR THE CENTER. TO THAT END, CUSTOMS WILL SCHEDULE A TRIP TO COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, BOLIVIA AND PERU, FOR LATE SEPTEMBER.

3. THE FOLLOWING CUSTOMS RESPONSES CORRESPONDING TO QUESTIONS CITED IN REFTEL ARE PROVIDED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

(A) THE PURPOSE OF SUCH A FACILITY WOULD BE THREEFOLD:

1) TO INITIALLY PROVIDE A HIGH QUALITY REGIONAL NARCOTIC DOG TRAINING CAPABILITY THROUGH STAFFING BY LOCAL DOG TRAINERS;

2) TO DEVELOP NARCOTIC DOG TRAINERS AND HANDLERS FROM PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WHO WOULD ULTIMATELY ESTABLISH THEIR OWN TRAINING;

3) TO ACT AS A MODEL UPON WHICH PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WOULD BASE THEIR OWN FACILITY.

(B) COLOMBIA, PERU, ECUADOR, AND MEXICO HAVE ALREADY PARTICIPATED IN U. S. CUSTOMS DOMESTIC TRAINING PROGRAMS. THERE HAVE BEEN ADDITIONAL REQUESTS FOR DOG TRAINING FROM ARA COUNTRIES. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE TRAINING ALREADY PROVIDED COLOMBIA, PERU AND ECUADOR HAS BEEN A SHORT THEORY COURSE RATHER THAN A "HANDS ON" TRAINING COURSE. THIS LATTER TYPE OF TRAINING WOULD BE THE THRUST OF ANY REGIONAL CENTER'S PROGRAM.

(C) ESTIMATING A TRAINING VOLUME IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT. IT MUST BE BASED UPON PARTICIPANT COUNTRIES COMMITMENT TO THE USE OF THE ANIMALS. AS A GUIDELINE, IT MAY HELP TO KNOW THAT U. S. CUSTOMS CURRENTLY HAS 110 NARCOTICS DOGS IN THE FIELD. ALTHOUGH THEY ARE CURRENTLY TRAINING ABOUT 75 DOGS PER YEAR IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE FIELD FORCE, ONLY ABOUT 20 PER YEAR WOULD BE TRAINED IF THE 110 LEVEL WERE TO BE MAINTAINED. THIS IS BASED UPON STATISTICS UNCLASSIFIED

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WHICH SHOW THAT A DOG, ACQUIRED AT AGE ONE, WILL BE CAPABLE OF WORKING FULL TIME UP UNTIL THE AGE OF NINE. NOTE THAT THIS IS BASED UPON U. S. CLIMATE, KENNELING, AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

(D) ONCE AGAIN, FACILITIES WOULD DEPEND UPON TRAINING VOLUME. ALTHOUGH THE ACTUAL KENNELING AND CLASSROOM AREA CAN BE QUITE SMALL, OPEN FIELDS, BUILDINGS, CARGO FACIL-

ITIES, AND AVAILABILITY OF AIRCRAFT, VESSELS, AND

VEHICLES MUST BE PROVIDED IN ORDER TO PRODUCE GOOD WORKING DOGS. U. S. CUSTOMS HAS USED VARIOUS COMMERCIAL FACILITIES FOR THE TRAINING OF THEIR ANIMALS. IDEALLY, TEN ACRES OF LAND FOR THE KENNEL, TRAINING FACILITY, AND GENERAL WORKOUT AREA ARE NEEDED.

(E) INITIAL EXPENSES WOULD DEPEND UPON WHETHER ANY EXISTING TRAINING FACILITIES EXIST. U. S. CUSTOMS CAN PROVIDE FIGURES ON FIXED AND VARIABLE EXPENSES, BASED UPON ITS DOMESTIC OPERATION, WHEN NEEDED. ALTHOUGH NO COMMENT IS OFFERED ON THE POSSIBLE SOURCE OF FUNDING, IT MIGHT BE WORTH CONSIDERING AN ATTEMPT TO OBTAIN MULTILATERAL COMMITMENT OF A PORTION OF THE EXPENSES BY AREA COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH INITIAL COSTS MAY BE HIGH, CUSTOMS VIEWS THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL DOG TRAINING CENTERS AS A GIANT STEP TOWARD PARTICIPANT COUNTRY SELF SUFFICIENCY IN NARCOTIC DOG TRAINING.

(F) CUSTOMS DEFERS TO THE EMBASSY REGARDING POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS. APART FROM THE AVAILABILITY OF THE FACILITIES MENTIONED IN CARACAS 4570, CUSTOMS KNOWS OF NO ADVANTAGE TO BASING THE CENTER IN PANAMA.

(G) THE U. S. CUSTOMS NARCOTIC DOGS ARE NOT GUARD DOGS, ATTACK DOGS, OR TRACKING DOGS. THEIR ONLY TRAINING, APART FROM VERY MINIMAL OBEDIENCE WORK, IS DIRECTED AT THE DETECTION OF NARCOTICS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS. FURTHERMORE, IN NORMAL USE, THE DOGS ARE ONLY RARELY IN THE VICINITY OF PASSENGERS. ROBINSON

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